

ing to the opinion of the people? Members ought to exercise their own judgements, but the sober deliberate sense of the people ought to have its influence. He would ask those of the old Assembly who were then present, the favored few of the old forty-four, what practical lessons they had learned from the late events? The Hon. and learned gent. from the township of Windsor had stated that no change had taken place in the political sentiments of the people. Why then were driven from those branches many men of the highest talent and respectability, and of an unsullied reputation as to moral character, but who had voted for measures in opposition to the wishes of the People, and gave to the late House a tone which he trusted the present House would moderately but firmly redeem. There were some measures carried in the late House which few men would have the moral courage to propose in this. He was satisfied that there was a majority in the house disposed to follow the example of the other colonial assemblies, and by an act of magnanimity to abridge their own power.—It was magnanimity because members might if they please, sit there for six years, and the secret inclination of every man to retain power, would naturally array itself against the measure proposed. He thought that 4 years constituted the happy medium; he conceived annual parliaments to be inconsistent with the genius of monarchical governments. In the congress of the neighboring republic, members were elected for two years. Why should the colonies of a monarchy go further on this subject, than was thought necessary by the people of a republic for their own institutions? Four years would give to the people just that degree of sober, rational reforming influence, which they ought to possess. He looked upon this measure as the grand touchstone of the present Assembly, and felt that its success or its failure would show the character of the new house.

Mr Stewart opposed the bill in a speech of considerable length, in which he repudiated the charges and insinuations that had been thrown out by certain members against the acts of the late House, and concluded by saying, before I sit down, I repeat my requisition, I demand in legal language, a bill of particulars of our offences—I for one stand ready here to meet, refute, and repel the unfounded charges, which have been so widely circulated against the late House, if they should be repeated here.

Mr Horne was at all times anxious not to tire the House with much speaking—he knew from experience that members were not inclined to waste time in listening to speeches, not bearing on the question, or calculated to facilitate the business before the House. I have, said he, studiously refrained from making charges in this Assembly upon those that preceded it. My opinions as respects their measures, I have elsewhere freely expressed—for those opinions I am of course responsible—but I presume that I can only be called on here to defend what I may say and do as a member of the House. As, however, the learned and honorable member from Cumberland has thought proper to challenge those who have elsewhere arraigned the conduct of the late House—and called upon them emphatically to meet him, and put their vague charges into shape and form—I, as one of those, am ready to accept the challenge—and to point him to some of the reasons which induced me to find fault—which created dissatisfaction in the country; and which, I believe, earned for that body a reputation that I trust the present House will endeavor to avoid.

I will not go into an elaborate review of all the measures of that Assembly, but the learned gentleman will permit me to turn his attention to one of their earliest acts—to remind him that, while yet fresh from the hustings—with

popular professions and sentiments of patriotism on their lips, one of the first things they did was to increase their own pay. Was this not a measure calculated to arouse suspicion? To excite the people's fears? And, though in itself perhaps a trifle, was it not a pretty decided indication of the spirit and leanings of that Assembly? One of the next things they did was to double their Speaker's salary. The learned gentleman will, perhaps also allow me to remind him of the commutation of the Quit Rents—that ridiculous arrangement, by which £2000 per annum were taken from the resources of the country to swell the casual Revenues by which the only chance of reducing our enormous salaries, and making a satisfactory adjustment of the Civil List, likely to occur for years was lost to the Province—and the hands of those, already too powerful for mischief, were thereby strengthened. These are some of the things which that House did; allow me to turn to some others which it neglected, and which this one has as yet, shown no disposition to neglect, and I trust may yet accomplish. The learned member has talked in a sneering tone of what this House has already done. What has been done will be acceptable to the country—as at least a pledge that it intends to do much more. It has already recorded its opinion of the right of all religious denominations to perfect equality—it has abolished one invidious distinction; and I trust they will follow up that measure with another which will drive the Bishop from the other branch of the Legislature. The Members of this House are the Representatives of the People, composed of every religious creed—and it is their duty to see that no particular and favoured Church has its representative, as a matter of exclusive right, at the Council Board.

The learned member from Cumberland is fearful that the quadrennial Bill is calculated to destroy the influence of this House upon the other Branches; but I will ask him if the last septennial Assembly took any effectual steps to diminish the powers of His Majesty's Council? Did they ask for the removal of the Bishop? Did they not leave the Chief Justice to preside over that Board, to mingle in the strifes of politics—and, by his influence over the Courts and the Bar, to foster and maintain an illiberal party in the Country, opposed to measures of reform, and the just claims and acknowledged interests of the people? I trust that this Assembly will endeavor, as far as possible, to draw a broad line of demarcation, separating the Judiciary from politics—and for one, I am free to declare, that I will never rest until the Chief Justice is removed from the Council. I will ask the learned gentleman if the last House attempted any thing effectual to satisfy the general wish of the Country, by improving the structure of that Branch? Does he consider that body, as now constituted, such a one as ought to exist, to pass sentence upon the measures of this House, and despatch the business of the Province? He knows that members of that body are called upon in one capacity to make the laws—in another to administer them, and in a third to advise the Executive as to their execution. Such a combination of powers is at variance with the principles of the British Constitution—and, if it be true, as has been pretended, that the abridgement of the period to four years, will fail to weaken their influence, I have little doubt that letting the public eye range over their deliberations will create a salutary check upon their conduct. But this House will fall short of its duty if it stops here—it should endeavour to have a reconstruction of that Body.

Having showed the learned and hon. gentleman, in answer to his defiance, my opinions of some of the acts and omissions of the past House, I will not occupy the time longer with

that subject. I support the present Bill because I believe it will improve the character and increase the power of the popular Branch, and because I am satisfied it will be acceptable to the people. It will give them more frequent opportunities of reviewing the conduct, and rewarding the faithfulness or punishing the neglect of members—and therefore I know that it must be practically useful. I will not libel the character of the constituency of the country, by attributing, as some gentlemen have done, the results of last election to mere accident. Here and there some local combinations, or some political influence, may have been brought to bear upon particular contests—but the electors in general knew well what they were about. I said on a former day that I was desirous of coupling this measure with the vote by Ballot, but was afraid of endangering one good principle by seeking too much in the same bill; yet I should be ashamed to allow this to pass without giving fair notice of my intentions to bring the other forward at a future time. The Hon. and learned gentleman from Cumberland has asked, if four years be good—why will one not be better? If that gentleman's coat wear well for four years, where would be the necessity of getting a new one every spring? But if it would not last seven, why should he wear it for three years after it became shabby and defaced?

The learned and hon. gentleman from Just au Corps, has stated that he is opposed to the vote by Ballot—that he is only for a moderate reform; and that he fears to introduce any new principle that has not been sanctioned by the practice of the Mother Country. For my part, I cannot altogether agree with him—I have not that pusillanimous horror of innovation with which some gentlemen are imbued. I do not think that the Colonial Legislatures should always shrink from the adoption of a sound principle, till the Imperial Parliament sets them the example. Would the learned gentleman neglect to shingle his House, till some wealthy neighbour, over the way, put his in a state of repair? I admit that innovations should not be hastily pressed in any country. I will not advise pulling down and changing merely for amusement—but am anxious that this House should, without reference to what may be done in other countries, or said across the water, ascertain where the shoe pinches us, and having done so, with a firm hand remove the evil. As regards the necessity for annual elections, which learned Gentlemen have urged, I am well aware that there are stratagems in politics as well as in war; and that when it is found impossible to break down a measure by fair arguments, its opponents sometimes try so to extend the principle, as to alarm the fears of those who seek only for rational reform. I am prepared to vote against the learned gentlemen—I will try the experiment of four years, and trust it will have a beneficial effect upon the Legislation of the Province. References have been made to the law, preventing the dissolution of the House, on the demise of the King I approved of that law. In England there are sound reasons for a dissolution—a new Ministry comes in as a matter of course. But what effect has the death of a dozen Kings on the public affairs of Nova Scotia? They may pass away as rapidly as Banquo's ghosts vanish from the stage, without producing any sensible influence here. To follow out the principle fairly, the House of Assembly ought to be dissolved every time the Colonial Ministers are changed, (and they are changed often enough, Heaven knows,) for they are the real Colonial Kings.

I was not desirous, Mr Chairman, to go back to former Houses of Assembly—nor to pass any censure here, whatever I may have done elsewhere, upon their measures, but have been drawn into it by what was said by others. I have